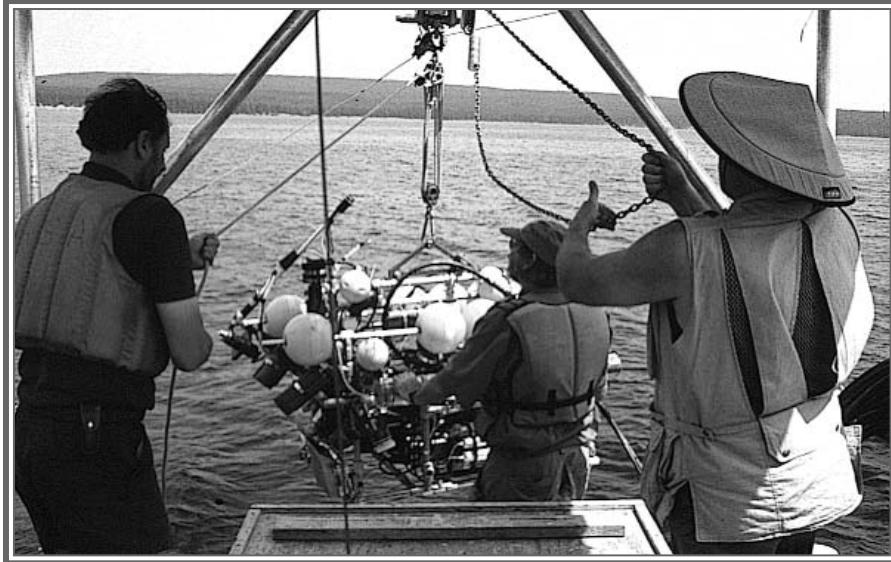
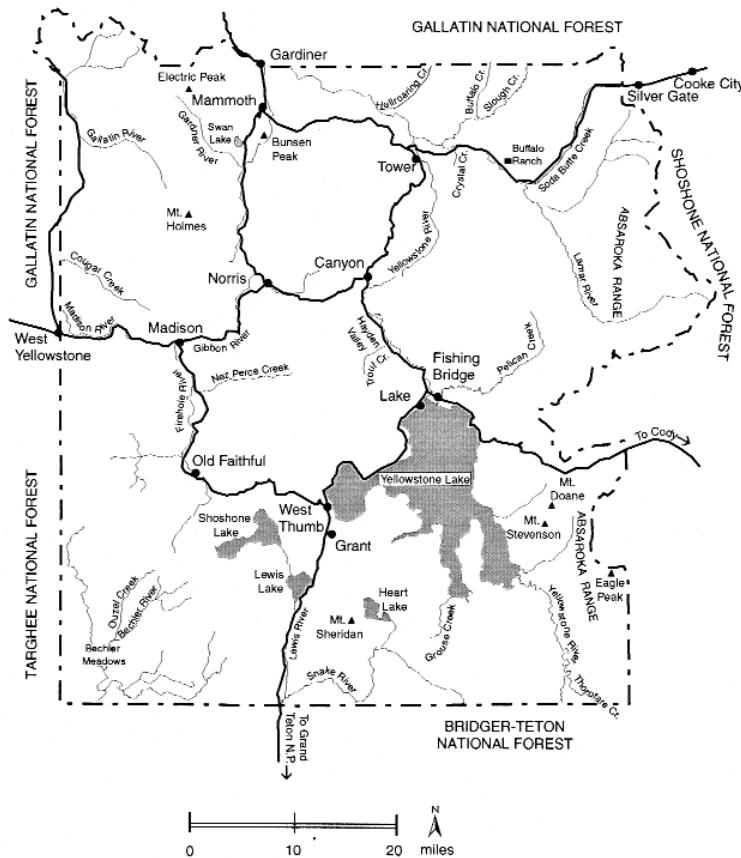


INVESTIGATORS'
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YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



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Yellowstone Center for Resources
 P.O. Box 168
 Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190

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Cover: USGS geoscientists launch a remotely-operated-vehicle as part of their investigations of hydrothermal features on the bottom of Yellowstone Lake. NPS photo.

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FOREWORD

Since the dawn of scientific wondering, human inquiry has led to the exploration, and often alteration, of almost everything in our world, at every scale—from the landscape of the moon to the human genome. In the national parks, however, through varying definitions and to varying degrees of success, we have attempted to “preserve natural conditions” for the past 130 years.

Their long-term preservation of natural resources makes parks reservoirs of information of great value to humanity, and perhaps today more than ever before, America’s national parks are being recognized as being more than pleasuring grounds and nature preserves. The NPS’s Natural Resource Challenge urges that in addition to using science as a means to improve park management, parks can and should be centers for broad scientific research and inquiry.

The national parks have long-captured the imagination of scientists, who recognized them as places where we could observe natural processes operating in places that had been less subject to human alteration than most others throughout the nation, and indeed throughout the world. In Yellowstone, those kinds of observed processes have ranged from macro-scale studies of landscape changes affecting the local ecosystem to micro-scale studies of tiny organisms that have the potential to change the lives of people the world over, making the protection of this wilderness relevant and crucial even to those who will never know its aesthetic and recreational wonders.

There are more than 300 index entries in this year’s Investigators’ Annual Report. That is a lot of science; a lot of knowledge being collected that needs to be shared. This report should not be seen as the body of that knowledge, but rather as its skeleton. Contact information is provided so that readers may learn more about the projects and results described here. All persons who wish to conduct their own research in Yellowstone are required to apply for a permit. Information on permitting procedures is available from the Research Permitting Office, Yellowstone Center for Resources, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

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